

REMARKS

This Supplemental Response is filed responsive to the Office communication dated 24 June 2009, which is a follow-up communication from the Office Action dated 5 January 2009. In the Office communication, the Office indicated that Applicants' response of 6 April 2009 was not fully responsive for two reasons: 1) the replacement abstract was not presented on a separate sheet; and 2) the patentable distinctions of each of the new claims was not specifically pointed out. This Supplemental Response is believed to correct these insufficiencies. Additionally, this Supplemental Response includes a Statement of the Substance of the Interview as appropriate following the brief telephonic interview. Additionally, Applicants noted in preparation of this Supplemental Response that newly presented Claim 9 included minor informalities that are corrected in this Supplemental Response. The amendments represented herein are marked up relative to the version examined by the Office (i.e., these amendments include those presented on 6 April 2009). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments presented herein. Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request reconsideration of the application in combination with this Supplemental Response and the prior Amendment and Response.

Substance of the Interview

On 29 June 2009, Applicants' attorney, Douglas McArthur, contacted Examiner James Hewitt in an effort to ensure that the Supplemental Response would provide all of the materials needed by the Examiner. Particularly, Applicants were unclear as to what exactly was being requested in regards to the new claims. Applicants' attorney has reviewed the Interview Summary provided on 2 July 2009 and find it to be an accurate summary of the conversation. As stated therein, Applicants now understand that the Examiner expects to see comments regarding each of the newly present claims so as to support their patentability. As seen below, Applicants have attempted to comply.

Amendments to the Abstract

The Office communication objected to the presentation of the replacement Abstract for failing to present it on a separate sheet. In this Supplemental Response, the replacement Abstract is provided on a separate sheet above as recommended by the MPEP, including the section

header "Amendments to the Specification." Additionally, and for the sake of ensuring a fully responsive reply, Applicants provide herewith the replacement Abstract on a separate page with no other markings. Applicants have attempted to make a complete reply to the Office's concerns. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the Specification, including the objections to the Abstract.

Remarks Regarding New Claims

The Office communication stated that the reply did not present arguments pointing out the specific distinctions believed to render the newly presented claims patentable over the applied references. Applicants believe that the following remarks satisfy the requirements of 37 C.F.R. 1.111.

With regard to new claims 9-25, Applicants remarks in the Amendment and Response establish that the newly presented claims are supported by the application as originally filed. New claims 9-25 include two independent claims, Claims 9 and 17, that provide the basis for Applicants' efforts to point out the specific distinctions believed to render the new claims patentable over the applied references. Beginning with Claim 9, Applicants note that Claim 9 recites a system having a first and second component each having a corresponding set of threads. Additionally, Claim 9 recites a connection collar configured to thread onto both the first and second component. In contrast, the systems disclosed by Sell do not threadingly engage both components on either side of Sell's connection sleeve. Applicants have presented more a complete discussion of Sell's disclosure in the prior Amendment and Response in support of the patentability of Claim 1. With respect to Claim 9, Applicants refer to that discussion and restate that Sell fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a connection collar configured to thread onto two different components as recited in Claim 9. As Sell fails to disclose this feature of Claim 9, Sell further fails to disclose, teach, or suggest every element of dependent Claims 10-16. Applicants respectfully submit that these comments specifically point out at least one manner in which the newly presented claims 9-16 distinguish from the applied references.

With respect to Claim 17 and dependent Claims 18-25, Applicants again point to Sell's failure to disclose a connector that threadingly engages both the first and the second components. Claim 17 recites a method of connecting two components having corresponding sets of threads. A connection collar is threaded on the first component. The first component and the second

component are then abutted in a predefined axial alignment. The connection collar is then threaded onto the second component while maintaining the predefined axial alignment. As described in the prior Amendment and Response, Sell discloses a coupling that uses threaded engagement on one end and a shoulder/lip engagement on the other end. Accordingly, Sell is unable to be threadedly engaged with both components. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that Sell fails to disclose, teach, or suggest the methods of Claim 17. Moreover, Applicants submit that Sell fails to disclose, teach, or suggest the elements of dependent Claims 18-25 for at least the reasons identified for Claim 17. Applicants respectfully submit that these comments specifically point out at least one manner in which the newly presented claims 17-25 distinguish from the applied references.

In this Supplemental Response, Applicant has addressed each and all of the issues raised in the Office communication. Applicant respectfully submits that each of the objections and rejections has been rendered moot and/or overcome by the foregoing amendments and remarks. Accordingly, Applicant believes that this application is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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